

Message from the Asia-Europe Foundation

On behalf of the partners of the European Studies in Asia (ESiA) network, namely, the Asia-Europe Foundation and the National Centre for Research on Europe, I have the honour of presenting the new publication entitled *The EU through the Eyes of Asia Volume II: New Cases, New Findings*.

This second volume of *The EU through the Eyes of Asia* series presents the findings of an eighteen month international research project carried out across three different ASEM member countries through the partnership and dedication of Ateneo de Manila University, Universitas Indonesia and Vietnam National University. The data collected throughout the research project provides scientifically valid feedback of the perceptions of the EU in Vietnam, Indonesia and The Philippines, along with that of the previous six locations, Mainland China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand. The information supplied by the research project is essential reading for EU stakeholders and opinion leaders both locally and internationally, as it provides key data to encourage better mutual understanding between the regions.

The publication of the findings of this significant study comes at a very timely period for the Asia-Europe Foundation, as we seek to expand the ongoing research in the area of Euro-Asian perceptions. At a recent meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, ASEF announced the expansion of the research project to include three further research locations of India, Macau and Malaysia. This expansion sees Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Macau and the Asia-Europe Institute (University of Malaya)

added to our long list of prestigious partners for this project. In addition to the expansion of “The EU through the Eyes of Asia”, we have recently announced, during the International Convention of Asia Scholars 6 held in Daejeon, Korea, the implementation of a further ASEF initiative examining the perceptions of Asia amongst Europeans.

Perhaps the most important aspect of extensive Asia-Europe research projects such as these, is the platform they provide to help forge partnerships, to encourage active participation across many sectors and to strengthen networks in the two regions. These projects are of paramount importance for the ESiA network, given its main objective of deepening the understanding between the two regions through knowledge transfer and assisting the development of European Studies in Asia.

Since its establishment in 1997 ASEF has brought together over 15000 participants from Asia and Europe through a variety of fora and from a multitude of sectors, all of these activities have fallen under one of the guiding principles of ASEF, to promote better “mutual understanding”. It is my personal view that to promote this mutual understanding between the two regions of Asia and Europe, it is necessary for us to first gauge our existing understanding of one another. The insights identified by “The EU through the Eyes of Asia” research project provide a unique opportunity to examine multi-level perceptions of the EU in Asia, assisting in identifying areas where misunderstandings and misperceptions prevail, thus allowing them to be addressed and mitigated.

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*Ambassador Dominique Girard
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